

dependence on foreign sources of oil and reducing that dependence, we can make our economy more secure, protect American consumers from the painful price spikes in the cost of gasoline and home heating oil and other fuels they have become accustomed to, and that not only drain individual budgets but hurt our national economic growth potential and reality.

Second, we will make our Nation more secure. Because no matter how strong we are militarily or even economically, if we end up depending so much on foreign sources of oil, our independence can be compromised. We cannot tolerate that.

Here is the reality. Ninety-seven percent of transportation in the United States is fueled by oil we buy from a unified global oil market. Saudi Arabia holds 20 percent of the world's oil reserves. Iran has 10 percent, led by a man who today repeatedly says to crowds in Iran, imagine a world without America; 10 percent of the world's oil reserves are in Iran. Venezuela, led by a virulently anti-American president, holds 6 percent of the world's oil reserves; Russia has 4.5 percent; Libya, 3 percent; the United States today has 1.5 percent of the world's oil reserves. We cannot leave our national and economic security dependent, therefore, on a resource that lies largely in the hands of others, including other nations that are either volatile or undemocratic or aligned against the United States.

H.R. 6, which combines the work of three or four different committees, contains many significant provisions that would reduce our Nation's oil consumption. I truly commend the heads of these committees, the chairmen and ranking members, for bringing this legislation forward. This may be the only opportunity we have in the 110th Congress, certainly the only opportunity we will have in this first year of the 110th session, to confront our energy dependence and deal with it. Therefore, it is very important that we work hard to make this bill as strong as we possibly can and, of course, as bipartisan. Our constituents, our Nation just watched the Senate unfortunately grind itself into gridlock over the comprehensive immigration bill. Let's not turn that show into a double feature with stalemate over energy security legislation as well, certainly not as prices soar and American consumers sour.

I want to speak briefly in favor of a bipartisan consensus amendment I and others will introduce as part of this debate. I am speaking on behalf of a bipartisan and geographically diverse group of Senators led by Senators BAYH, BROWNBACK, SALAZAR, COLEMAN, and many others. We will offer an amendment to replace the gasoline savings goal of H.R. 6, the underlying legislation, with title I of our so-called DRIVE Act. DRIVE, in the strange world of acronyms, stands for Dependence Reduction Through Innovation in

Vehicles and Energy. This is the successor to an earlier version—which title didn't make a good acronym, but which title I loved—which was the Set America Free Act, because right now we are not free. We are dependent on others for our energy. The DRIVE Act's title I, which we will introduce as an amendment, would direct the executive branch of Government to identify within 9 months and to publish within 18 months Federal requirements that will achieve a 2.5 million barrel-per-day reduction in U.S. oil consumption by 2016, a 7 million barrel-per-day reduction by 2026, and a 10 million barrel-per-day reduction by 2031. That is about 50 percent of the per-day oil consumption of the United States today.

This amendment would also direct the Office of Management and Budget to publish an analysis identifying the oil savings projected to be achieved by each requirement to be created and demonstrating that the listed measures will, in the aggregate, achieve the overall specified oil savings.

Finally, the measure includes specific requirements for the executive branch to evaluate, review, and update the action plan so we can achieve these critical national goals.

The targets for savings in H.R. 6 are expressed in terms of American gasoline consumption. The amendment would express them in terms of what we think is a more relevant standard which is overall oil consumption, because reducing gasoline use can be achieved by increasing the use of diesel which, of course, is also made from oil. So oil consumption reduction is, in our opinion, the more appropriate goal for this law, and that is why we are going to introduce this as an amendment to H.R. 6. The gasoline savings goal in H.R. 6 amounts to about a 20-percent reduction in projected oil consumption by 2030, 23 years from now. The oil savings requirement in our amendment amounts to a 35-percent reduction in projected oil consumption in 2030. That is a significant increase in reduction and one we can achieve, if we set the goal as high as it should be, high enough to cut our dependence on foreign oil and free America from that dependence.

I believe there is broad bipartisan support in the Senate for these stronger targets. Indeed, the fuel economy and renewable fuels provisions already found elsewhere in H.R. 6 will themselves go a long way toward achieving the stronger targets. The DRIVE amendment's cosponsors believe that we need targets that will keep the pressure on the Executive branch to use the authorities Congress has provided to achieve robust oil savings.

The DRIVE Act has 26 cosponsors, including 6 Republicans. Thus, the language of our DRIVE amendment is bipartisan and consensus-based. I hope my colleagues will adopt it overwhelmingly.

I would like to explain my opposition to an amendment that I understand

will be offered, an amendment that—while intricately drafted—has the sole purpose of opening the Arctic Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling.

Most of my colleagues have been through enough Senate debates over this issue to know that it is highly controversial and deeply divisive. I believe that if an Arctic drilling amendment were added to this bill, it would prevent Senate passage of otherwise bipartisan legislation that could reshape—but not despoil—our energy landscape.

I myself filibustered the last bill to which an Arctic drilling provision was attached.

Let me just repeat a fact that I stated at the beginning of my remarks: The United States holds just 1.5 percent of the world's oil reserves. Oil is a global commodity—like wheat or corn, gold or copper—that essentially has a single world benchmark price.

That means we could drain every last drop of oil from U.S. territory, despoiling our last stretches of wilderness in the process, and U.S. production still would amount to no more than a trickle in the stream of global supply.

We would do irrevocable damage to our natural heritage without having an appreciable effect on the price that Americans pay for oil, and without reducing our crippling oil addiction by one iota.

It is time we face up to the fact that we cannot drill our way out of this problem. The only effective and permanent solution to high gas prices—the only effective and permanent solution to energy dependence—is to dramatically reduce our oil consumption. H.R. 6 takes an impressive step in that direction. The DRIVE amendment would lengthen that step to a stride. But adding an Arctic drilling provision would kill the entire enterprise, leaving us in the same, unacceptable situation we find ourselves in now. So I respectfully ask that my colleagues vote “yes” on the DRIVE amendment, and “no” on any measure that would open the treasured Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling.

The American people are energized on this issue. Let's not let them look to the Senate and think they have hit a dry well of gridlock.

Mr. President, I note the presence of one of my colleagues on the floor who I know wants to speak during this half hour of morning business, so I will say, very briefly, we have an opportunity to do something right for the American people, if we can work across party lines—and none of this should be partisan—to get this done.

Again I note in that regard, with some regret, some of my colleagues have indicated an intention to once again introduce an amendment that would open the Arctic Wildlife Refuge to oil and drilling. Obviously, they have a right to do so. This has been debated often in the Senate. My only word of caution is I fear such an amendment, if it is attached to this